

Common Sense: Anxiety & Relaxation Techniques

Arizona Department of Corrections
Health Service Bureau

Inmate Wellness Program
HEP 1053- 01/06



Relaxation techniques can effectively reduce the level of anxiety. There are many different relaxation techniques. Some people want to feel the positive results immediately. This can happen, however,

sometimes you need months of practice in order for the techniques to work fully. In order to be successful and feel positive results fully, you need to be patient. **The key is to keep practicing the techniques.** Here are a few exercises you can start with.

▲ Relaxation / Tension. Find a body position in which you feel comfortable.

- ✓ Determine which muscles feel tense (arm, forearm, hand, etc.). Choose one area at a time.
- ✓ Tense these muscles for 5 to 7 seconds.
- ✓ Then, relax these muscles for 20 seconds.
- ✓ Repeat this exercise as many times as you wish.

▲ Breathing.

- ✓ Slowly breath in through your nose until you have comfortably filled your lungs with air.
- ✓ Hold the air in your lungs for at least 5 seconds but no more than 8 seconds.
- ✓ Slowly breathe out through your mouth.
- ✓ Repeat this exercise several times.



▲ Imagery.

- ✓ As you practice other relaxation exercises, you will begin to feel more comfortable. When you have relaxed tense muscles and slowed your breathing, begin to focus on an image or scene which you find relaxing.
- ✓ Gradually pay attention to each of your senses (for example, what would you hear, smell, taste, or feel). **Practice this as often as you like.**



▲ Music.

- ✓ Choose music that makes you feel relaxed and positive.
- ✓ Not too loud, but not so soft that you can't hear it.
- ✓ Make an effort not to be disturbed by things around you.
- ✓ While you are hearing the music keep you mind fully "blank" or give yourself positive directions such as **I feel relaxed; Nothing is bothering me at this time; and All my muscles are relaxed.**

If you discipline yourself and do these exercises, YOU WILL GET RESULTS! Contact Counseling and Treatment Services if you cannot control your anxiety with these techniques.